

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-02 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

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P R 072044Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8666

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 0542

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN EAIR SC ST

SUBJ: CIVAIR: ST. LUCIA, ST. KITTS REQUEST AIR ROUTES TO U.S.

REF: STATE 048111 AND PREVIOUS

1. BOTH ST. LUCIA AND ST. KITTS HAVE MADE FORMAL REQUESTS TO EMBASSY FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR BWIA TO OPERATE SERVICES TO THEIR TERRITORIES ON AIRLINE'S NEW YORK ROUTES.

2. ST. KITTS DEPUTY PREMIER PAUL SOUTHWELL, AFTER BEING INFORMED THAT BWIA MAY ONLY OPERATE TO ST. KITTS ON ITS MIAMI ROUTE (REFTEL), SENT EMBASSY LETTER DATED MARCH 12 ASKING FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR BWIA TO INCLUDE ST. KITTS ON ITS NEW YORK ROUTE. ACCORDING TO REFTEL, SUCH AUTHORIZATION WOULD REQUIRE AMENDMENT OF US-GOTT AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (I.E. U.S.-U.K. AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT AS PER 1962 EXCHANGE OF NOTES). SOUTHWELL EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT BWIA WAS PRESENTLY ABLE TO INCLUDE ST. KITTS ON ITS MIAMI BUT NOT ITS NEW YORK ROUTE AND STATED THAT GOSK IS PREPARED TO JOIN WITH BWIA AND GOTT IN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH ANY APPROPRIATE USG AUTHORITIES.

3. ST. LUCIA PREMIER JOHN COMPTON, IN LETTER DATED MARCH 27, ALLEGES THAT BWIA MADE AN APPLICATION FOR DIRECT NON-STOP SERVICE BETWEEN ST. LUCIA AND NEW YORK " SOME THREE YEARS AGO" AND, AFTER DESCRIBING PRESENT ADVERSE EFFECTS OF INADEQUATE AIR SERVICES ON ST. LUCIA'S TOURIST SECTOR, ASKS EMBASSY TO "IMPRESS
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UPON CAB IMPORTANCE WHICH GOSL ATTACHES TO BWIA APPLICATION".

COPIES OF BOTH SOUTHWELL AND COMPTON LETTERS POUCHED TO EB/OA
THIS DATE.

4. COMMENT: NEW YORK - ST. LUCIA SERVICE BY BWIA MIGHT RESULT
IN SOME COMPETITION TO EAL WHICH RUNS A SERVICE TO ST. LUCIA FOUR
TIMES WEEKLY ON ITS PORT OF SPAIN ROUTE, (WHICH ALSO INVOLVES
ANTIGUA, ST. CROIX AND MARTINIQUE). WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING
STATUS OF ALLEGED BWIA APPLICATION BUT WE RECOMMEND THAT, PROVID-
ING COMPETITION BWIA WOULD OFFER EAL IS NOT EXCESSIVE, DEPARTMENT
GIVE CONSIDERATION TO GOSL REQUEST. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE KNOW-
ING WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR BWIA TO OPEN SERVICES TO
ST. LUCIA BY ADDING ISLAND TO AN EXISTING BWIA ROUTE.

5. PROBLEM INVOLVING ST. KITTS IS, IN OUR ESTIMATION, MORE
URGENT. ST. KITTS IS, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, NOT PRESENTLY SERVED
BY ANY US CARRIER. ISLAND'S ECONOMY IS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON
SUGAR AND TOURISM AND, IF SOUTHWELL'S DESCRIPTIONS ARE ACCURATE,
LATTER SECTOR HAS TAKEN A SEVERE BEATING THIS YEAR WITH EXTREMELY
LOW OCCUPANCY RATES. EAL MAINTAINS THAT IT HAS NO INTEREST IN
SERVING ST. KITTS BECAUSE OF ISLAND'S LIMITED TOURIST BED CAPA-
CITY. SINCE AUTHORIZATION FOR BWIA TO SERVE ST. KITTS ON NEW
YORK ROUTE WOULD NOT, AT LEAST IN OUR VIEW, ADVERSELY AFFECT US
CARRIER'S INTEREST AND, GIVEN SERIOUS ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ST.
KITTS, WE WOULD HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT COULD CONSIDER SYMPATHETI-
CALLY AMENDMENT TO US-TOTT AGREEMENT TO PERMIT BWIA SERVICES TO
ST. KITTS ON NEW YORK ROUTE.
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